

**QUOTABLE** In Print

“This bill...[will] tarnish Israel’s image as a state committed to democratic values. It is our hope that the Israeli Supreme Court will uphold Israel’s tradition of personal liberty and strike down the legislation.”

—URJ President Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, in response to Knesset legislation which will allow for civil proceedings against individuals or organizations found to be instigators of anti-Israel boycotts, and will bar companies that participate in such boycotts from bidding for Israeli government tenders

“Because the choices we make when we extract and use energy affect people’s lives and the planet’s well-being, for generations to come, there is no bigger moral issue facing humanity today.”

—Rabbi Daniel Swartz, spiritual leader of Temple Hesed in Scranton and vice president of Pennsylvania Interfaith Power and Light. In 2011 the interreligious group, comprised of 50 congregations and 100 individuals, issued a four-page “ethical analysis” that opposes Marcellus Shale gas well development because of its environmental and health risks, among other reasons.

**NOTEWORTHY**

**URJ Grant helps a Chicago Congregation Engage Young Leaders:** Utilizing a URJ incubator grant, North Shore Congregation Israel (NSCI) in suburban Chicago has created B&B (Beyond and Back), a values and leadership development program for Jews age 22-30 that not only connects them to their Jewish identity and the synagogue, but also allows them to mentor and engage Jewish high school students.

Twice a year NCSI holds high school “identity devel-

**ACTION** *continued from page 73*

How do you manage a budget when there’s a projected deficit? What strategies will maximize the effectiveness of your committee meetings? How might monitoring the temple bulletin help you evaluate whether your synagogue is fulfilling its mission (performing acts of lovingkindness, learning daily, welcoming the stranger, etc.)?

In White Plains, New York, 450-member Woodlands Community Temple ([wct.org](http://wct.org)) offers all members a free leadership development course covering such practical and spiritual matters. Created by temple member and URJ Senior Congregational Advisor Dale Glasser with Rabbi Billy Dreskin’s help, *Derekh* (“the road” in Hebrew) has taught 143 congregants essential skills and “has led to a different committee experience here, because of our populating committees with people who’ve learned how to participate and lead,” Rabbi Dreskin says.

Joey Pinzon (**photo #2**) had wanted to be more active at temple when he received an invitation to join *Derekh*. As part of his leadership training, the father of three also sat in on meetings of the religious school board and the youth committees, both of which he joined after completing the program. He credits the larger *Derekh* experience in “teaching me how to be a better listener. Often we are so quick to speak and react to only part of what we hear. I’ve learned to wait and listen and respond to a bigger picture.”

Rabbi Dreskin also credits *Derekh* for hastening the pace at which members join the leadership. And, he says, “there’s nothing like having a 143-person list from which to draw. Before *Derekh*, every time the temple president and I needed someone to serve in some capacity, we had to work our way through the entire temple membership roster. Now, there’s always a place to begin our search for new committee members.”

Rabbi Ron Segal of 1,300-member Temple Sinai in Atlanta ([temple-sinaiatlanta.org](http://temple-sinaiatlanta.org)) likens the synagogue’s

leadership recruitment process to “a football team with talented players who have studied the same playbook before going onto the field—it’s quicker and smoother.” Step one in the leadership training program known as *Atidaynu* (meaning “our future”) is to draw up a list of potential invitees from a cross-section of congregants who have demonstrated a commitment to synagogue life. Next, those who join the program attend a weekend retreat in August, followed by eight monthly leadership sessions. Afterwards, graduates complete a survey to match their interests with leadership opportunities.

One participant, Jeff Crow (**photo #3**), was so energized by *Atidaynu*, he later volunteered to create Temple Sinai’s logo, marketing line, and communications strategy. His goal: “a branding initiative designed to succinctly and effectively communicate the feelings the retreat developed in me.”

Now a vice president of Temple Sinai, Crow thinks of *Atidaynu* as the equivalent of a college degree in temple management. “Could I have been vice president without being part of *Atidaynu*?” he asks aloud. “I don’t think so.”



In 2003 a very busy Mark Bresnick accepted an invitation to participate in the *Atidaynu* leadership development program at 120-member Temple Beth Or in Everett, Washington ([templebethor.org](http://templebethor.org)). Seven years after completing the program, he finally had time to volunteer and agreed to become the temple’s vice president of finance—a decision he attributes largely to *Atidaynu*.

“Some people need to be encouraged to be leaders,” says former temple president and program creator Sonia Siegel Vexler (**photo #4**). “When you identify them as leaders, they sit up straighter and often step up to the plate. With a leadership program, you do a little nudging, and you also give them the confidence and the skills they need to be a great leader in your temple.”